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(72) Inventors:
• Dolan, Donald T.
Ridgfield, CT 06877 (US)

- **French, Dale A.**
Clinton, CT 06413 (US)
- **Lawton, Kathryn V.**
Branford, CT 06405 (US)

**(74) Representative: Avery, Stephen John et al
Hoffmann, Eitle & Partner,
Patent- und Rechtsanwälte,
Arabellastrasse 4
81925 München (DE)**

(54) **Method and apparatus for securely authorizing performance of a function in a distributed system such as a postage meter**

(57) A method for authorizing performance of a function in a distributed system (1) having first (3) and second (5) subsystems in communication with each other includes the steps of separately generating a mutual session key within the first and second subsystems; utilizing the mutual session key generated in each

of the first and second subsystems (3, 5) for authenticating the first subsystem; and authorizing performance of the function only upon completion of the authenticating of step B). An apparatus performs the inventive method.

FIG. 1

